

OMINOUS PARALLELS AND OPTIMISTIC DIFFERENCES: OPIUM IN CHINA AND AFGHANISTAN

*James Windle*¹

Abstract

This paper compares two of history's largest producers of opium - Afghanistan (2000-11) and China (1917-35) - to suggest that in both cases production was facilitated by: (1) A lack of central control over the national territory; (2) The existence of local power-holders; (3) Internal violent conflict; (4) The existence of a significant domestic opium consuming population.

The initial analysis is extended by introducing a successful opium production suppression intervention, The People's Republic of China (1950s/1960s), to suggest that the control of opium in contemporary Afghanistan requires the Government to: (1) Extend the state into isolated and hostile areas; (2) Facilitate a sense of self-interest in the Afghan Government and political elite towards opium suppression; (3) Facilitate a perception that suppression benefits opium farmers; (4) Strengthen the capacity to monitor opium farmers and enforce the law.

Keywords: Afghanistan; Alternative development; China; Drug law enforcement; Opium;

Introduction

The Afghan and Chinese opium trades have been well documented, however, no study has yet to compare the two countries at the peak of their respective production (1917-35 for China and 2000-11 for Afghanistan). While there are inherent difficulties in transferring experiences across time and space, there are extensive and insightful similarities between the experiences of history's two largest opium producing countries. Furthermore, during the 1950s China, under the Communist Government, was able to remove all unregulated opium production from its national territory. Introducing Communist China provides an additional element to the comparative mix. This article shall provide in-depth narratives on the three cases which shall elucidate similarities and differences in order to provide experiences to contemporary drug policy.

¹ James Windle- Lecturer in Criminology at University of East London, UK J.Windle@uel.ac.uk. The author would like to thank Graham Farrell, Sinead Drew, Lars Laamann and the anonymous referees for their thoughtful and constructive comments on early drafts.

The findings demonstrate how large-scale production in China and Afghanistan was driven by: (1) A lack of central control over the national territory; (2) The existence of local power-holders (i.e. warlords and government military commanders); (3) Internal violent conflict; (4) The existence of a significant domestic opium consuming population.

Whereas, the experience of Communist China suggests that a successful intervention requires: (1) A government which perceives suppression as in its best interest; (2) A government with authority throughout opium producing areas; (3) The provision of incentives for which farmers perceive some benefit to the cessation of production; (4) A state with the capability to monitor opium farmers and administer law enforcement. This article does not suggest the administration of a highly repressive intervention modelled upon the Chinese Communist Parties (henceforth CCP) approach, but rather the development of the structural means of suppressing production prior to administering any systematic law enforcement centred intervention. This paper shall provide detailed narratives of the three cases before presenting the findings of a cross-case comparison. The final section provides some preliminary suggestions for how the lessons learned could be transferred to contemporary Afghanistan.

1 China: Background and Context

During the early-1960s China removed a long standing prohibition on opium production in Yunnan Province to fund the suppression of the Panthay Uprising. Several other provinces followed this example and *de facto* legalisation preceded the official repeal of prohibition in the mid-1880s. China gradually overtook India as the world's largest source of opium and by 1905 Szechwan and South-West Hupei Provinces alone produced almost eight times that of India.² Low prices and profuse availability increased consumption to exceptionally high levels. In 1890, an estimated 10 percent of the Chinese population smoked opium; this may have been as high as 60 to 80 percent in some areas,³ while as low as five percent in others.⁴ By 1906 official accounts suggest that between 30 to 40 percent of the population had

² James Windle, 'Insights for Contemporary Drug Policy: A Historical Account of Opium Control in India and Pakistan,' *Asian Journal of Criminology*. DOI:10.1007/s11417-011-9104-0 (2011).

³ Jonathan Spence, 'Opium Smoking in Ching China,' in Frederic Wakeman, and Carolyn Grant (eds.) *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China* (University of California Press, 1975).

⁴ Richard K. Newman, 'Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration,' *Modern Asian Studies*, 29(4) (1995) 765-794.

smoked opium.⁵ This said, the majority appear to have consumed small quantities and avoided heavy or habitual use.⁶

By the turn of the twentieth century, China began to perceive opium as a threat to the productivity and health of the nation⁷ and in September 1906 issued an Imperial Decree declaring the gradual suppression of opium production, trade and consumption.⁸ In 1911, however, the Imperial regime was removed and a Republic declared. While there was an initial resurgence during the revolutionary period, production remained below 1906 levels⁹ and in 1912 the new President ordered all officials to renew suppression efforts.¹⁰ Observers from the British Foreign Office reported how the regime initially surpassed 'the rigors of the Manchu rulers'.¹¹ Both Imperial and Republican interventions were centred upon a highly repressive incarnation of law enforcement which pushed many farmers deeper into poverty.¹² In 1917, a Chinese-British joint investigation declared all provinces of China 'opium-

⁵ *Memorandum Respecting the Prohibition of Opium Smoking in China*, (1907), The National Archives of the UK (henceforth TNA) FO881/9099. To place this in perspective, in 2010 the country with the world's largest opium consuming population was Iran, where 2.26 percent of the population consumed an illicit opiate. Forty percent consumed opium, the majority of the remainder consumed heroin: United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2011* (United Nations Publication, 2011).

⁶ Frank Dikötter, Lars Laamann and Zhou Xun, *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China* (Hurst and Company, 2004); Newman, 'Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration'.

⁷ Alan Baumler, 'Opium Control Versus Opium Suppression: The Origin of the 1935 Six-Year Plan to Eliminate Opium and Drugs,' in Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi (eds.) *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (University of California Press, 2000); William O. Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991). It should be noted that many authors reject the proposition that opium is damaging to the health of the majority of consumers. See Dikötter et al. *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China*; Newman, 'Opium Smoking in Late Imperial China: A Reconsideration'.

⁸ *Memorandum Respecting the Prohibition of Opium Smoking in China*.

⁹ J. Jordan, (1913), 'Sir J. Jordan to Sir Edward Grey. February 10th 1913'. TNA FO881/10481. *Further Correspondence Respecting Opium*.

¹⁰ Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954*.

¹¹ Graham Dixon, *The Truth about Opium*, p.2. (India Office, 1922). TNA FO228/3365. *Opium*, 526 Volume IX.

¹² See W.P.W. Turner, (1914), 'Report on a journey of investigation into the cultivation of the opium poppy in South Fukien. Jointly with officials appointed by the Chinese Government' TNA FO228/2458. *Opium, April, May, June, 1914*; Foreign Office (henceforth FO), (1913), 'H.B.M. Consulate, Tengyeh. April 10th, 1913'. TNA FO228/2454. *Opium*; FO, (1917), 'H.M. Consulate, Nanking. (1917). Poppy Cultivation in Kiangsu. 3rd March 1917'. TNA FO228/2454. *Opium*; International Anti-Opium Association, *The War Against Opium*, (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1922); Archibald Rose, (1910), 'Report by the Acting Consul Rose on the Opium Crops in Western Yunnan for the Season 1909-1910'. TNA FO881/9904. *Further Correspondence Respecting Opium*.

free'.¹³ The fragmentation of the state was, however, to make prohibition unsustainable.

2 China: 1917-1935

From 1911, numerous warlords¹⁴ had begun consolidating their authority separate from Beijing. In 1915, several warlords from Yunnan Province declared their independence. Then, in response to multiple uprising in 1916, President Yuan Shikai abdicated. Responding to this opportunity, the majority of southern warlords declared independence whilst northern warlords fought over the central government in Beijing; essentially fragmenting the Chinese state.¹⁵ The warlords who 'now controlled much of China, had a wide variety of backgrounds and maintained their power in different ways';¹⁶ many had been part of the national military, others were provincial or district governors whilst some were:

...simply thugs...Some dominated whole provinces and financed their armies with local taxes collected by their own bureaucracies; others controlled only a handful of towns and got their money from "transit taxes" collected at gunpoint or through confiscation. Some warlords were deeply loyal to the idea of a legitimate republic..., others believed Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang represented China's legitimate government... Many... were capable of ferocities and erratic cruelty... but many others were educated men who tried to instil in their troops their own vision of morality.¹⁷

The 'warlord era' brought:

...economic and social distress to China: opium poppies were planted in times of extreme famine, government administration became meaningless in many provinces, and the dislocation of legitimate trade impeded industrial growth and the modernisation of agriculture.¹⁸

In short, it 'brought the country to the brink of disaster'.¹⁹ While suppression officially continued in areas under Beijing – just two or three provinces around the capital – control of the central Government was unstable and composed of belligerent

¹³ Foreign Policy Association, (1924), 'China. Committee on Traffic in Opium. October 24th 1924'. TNA FO371/10345. *Political: Far East, Opium*; International Anti-Opium Association, *Opium Cultivation and Traffic in China* 4(2) (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1924).

¹⁴ While the term 'warlord' is often contested, Bianco maintains that in China it characterised the source of their power 'they were pre-eminently men who owned their fortune to war'. Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*, translated by Muriel Bell (Stanford University Press, 1967), p.22.

¹⁵ Frederic Wakeman, *The Fall of Imperial China* (Free Press, 1977).

¹⁶ Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (Norton and Company, 1990), p.288.

¹⁷ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, p.288/9.

¹⁸ Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954*, p.35.

¹⁹ Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*.

northern warlords.²⁰ As such, the British consulate reported the futility of approaching the impotent central Government to protest against increasing production.²¹ Especially as many warlords facilitated opium production to finance conflicts²² over territories, the central Government and areas important to the profitable opium trade.²³

British Foreign Office records suggest that dual authority often existed.²⁴ Several provincial civil governments opposed opium production,²⁵ while production was simultaneously facilitated by warlords. Some warlords extended advice on soil and irrigation management to improve yields²⁶ and violently resisted civil eradication attempts.²⁷ To ensure that opium was the only cost-effective crop, many warlords imposed extortionately high land taxes.²⁸ More overt coercion included the fining or execution of farmers or village leaders refusing to produce opium.²⁹ In some districts,

²⁰ Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*; Kathryn Meyer and Terry Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade* (Rowman & Littlefield, Inc, 1998); Edward R. Slack, 'The National Anti-Opium Association and the Guomindang State, 1924-1937', in Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi (eds.) *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (University of California Press, 2000).

²¹ Dixon, *the Truth about Opium*.

²² One Fukien warlord, for example, financed an expansion of 10,000 soldiers through taxing opium production: FO, (1920), 'H.B.M. Consulate, Foochow. Opium in Fukien. 20th April 1920'. TNA FO228/3361.

²³ See, Lucien Bianco, 'The Response of Opium Growers to Eradication Campaigns and the Poppy Tax, 1907-1949,' Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi (eds.) *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (University of California Press, 2000); International Anti-Opium Association, *The Annual Report*, 4(1) (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1924).

²⁴ W.R. Cole, (1920), 'To Rev. W.P.W. Williams. April 15th 1920'; FO, (1920), 'H.B.M. Consulate-General, Henkow. 24th June 1920'. TNA FO 228/3361. *Opium: 1915 January to July*, John Hind, (1922), 'Correspondence from John Hind to Mr Clennell'. TNA FO228/3364. *Opium 526 Volume VIII*.

²⁵ Graham Aspland, 'Opium Traffic's Stranglehold on China,' *Current History*, 22(4) (1925), 609-613; FO, (1920), 'Translated Note September 4th 1919'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; FO, (1920), 'Report on Cultivation of Poppy and Trade in and Consumption of Opium in Canton Consular District'; FO, (1920), 'H.B.M. Consulate, Changshe. Report on Opium in Hunan. 11th February 1920'. TNA FO 228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*.

²⁶ FO, (1920), 'Summary of Consular Reports on the Traffic in the Provinces' TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*.

²⁷ FO, (1920), 'H.B.M. Consulate-General, Henkow. 24th June 1920'; International Anti-Opium Association, *Bulletin of the International Anti-Opium Association: Peking*, 2(3) (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1922).

²⁸ F. Buckley, 'China's Failure to Suppress Opium Traffic,' *Current History*, 35(1) (1931), 77-81; International Anti-Opium Association, *Opium Cultivation and Traffic in China*; L. Talman, (1919), 'Tong-an, Amoy, December 21st 1919'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; C. Von-ko, 'The Fow-chow Villages as Founded on Opium,' 1935, reprinted in Richard Tawney (ed.) *Agrarian China: Selected Source Material from Chinese Authors* (Kelly and Walsh, 1938).

²⁹ FO, (1919), 'Opium: Photographic Evidence of Compulsory Cultivation in Chien-Ch'ang Valley'. TNA FO 228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; International Anti-Opium Association, *Bulletin of the International Anti-Opium Association: Peking*; International Anti-Opium Association, *The Annual Report*.

food crops were eradicated to make way for opium, contributing to famines in Kweichow and Shensi Provinces between 1921 and 1923, and food deficits in other provinces.³⁰ This said, in other districts opium was profitable and farmers chose to acquiesce to warlord demands and/or openly resist civil bans.³¹

Not all provinces grew opium. Civil authorities continued to brutally suppress production in Chefoo, Chungking and Shansi Provinces.³² Other civil authorities were apathetic or administered their own monopolies,³³ often whilst publicly prohibiting production.³⁴ By 1923, many civil provincial governments were recording opium taxes in their official treasury records and punishing unlicensed producers and merchants. The national military were also implicated in the distribution of opiates throughout China and into Burma and Indochina.³⁵ During the early/mid-1920s national production averaged between 2,000 tons and 15,000 tons³⁶ and accounted for anywhere between nine-tenths and 50 percent of global production. Illicitly exported

³⁰ FO, (1920), 'H.B.M. Consulate-General, Henkow. 24th June 1920'; International Anti-Opium Association, *Bulletin of the International Anti-Opium Association: Peking*; International Anti-Opium Association, *Opium Cultivation and Traffic in China*; C. Kiang, 'The North-Western Corner of China,' 1937, reprinted in Richard Tawney (ed.) *Agrarian China: Selected Source Material from Chinese Authors* (Kelly and Walsh, 1938); R.A. Rogers, (1919), 'Changchow. 20th October 1919'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; Von-ko, 'The Fow-chow Villages as Founded on Opium'.

³¹ Bianco, 'The Response of Opium Growers to Eradication Campaigns and the Poppy Tax, 1907-1949'.

³² See, FO, (1920), 'Report on the Cultivation of the Poppy and the Trade in and Consumption of Opium in the Chefoo Consular District'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; FO, (1920), 'British Consulate, Chungking. Report on Cultivation in Eastern Szechwan. April 14th 1920'. TNA FO228/3361. *Opium 526/18, Volume V*; FO, (1920), 'Province of Shansi is Opium Free'. TNA FO674/232.

³³ Chas Bridgman, (1919), 'Chas Bridgman to Stark Toller. April 4th 1919'. TNA FO 228/3358. *Opium: 526/18 Volume II*; Executive Yuan, (1935), 'Rural Investigation in Yunnan,' reprinted in Richard Tawney (ed.) *Agrarian China: Selected Source Material from Chinese Authors* (Kelly and Walsh, 1938); FO, (1919), 'Opium: Closing Down of the Anti-Narcotic Society'. TNA FO674/217. *Opium*; FO, (1920), 'Report on Cultivation of Poppy and Trade in and Consumption of Opium in Canton Consular District'; M.A. Ottewill, (1919), 'Opium Reports for Yunnan and Kweichow. 27th December 1919'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; International Anti-Opium Association, *Bulletin of the International Anti-Opium Association: Peking* (1922).

³⁴ FO, (1920), 'Cultivation of Opium Poppy (South Fukien). Notes on Extracts from Amoy Local Native Press'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; FO, (1920), 'Association of Hunan Residents at Shanghai to H.M. Minister Peking. January 12th 1920'. TNA FO228/3360. *Opium 526/18 Vol. III*; FO, (1920), 'British Consulate, Swatow. Poppy Cultivation and Trade in and Consumption of Opium in Swatow District. April 12th 1920'. TNA FO228/3361. *Opium 526/18, Volume V*.

³⁵ See, F. Buckley, 'China's Failure to Suppress Opium Traffic'; Bulletin of Narcotics, 'Illicit Traffic in Opium,' *Bulletin of Narcotics*, 3 (1953) 24-29; International Anti-Opium Association, *Bulletin of International Anti-Opium Association: Peking* 3(3) (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1923); International Anti-Opium Association, *Annual Report* 4(1) (Tientsin Press Ltd, 1924).

³⁶ See, Foreign Policy Association, *China. Committee on Traffic in Opium. October 24th 1924*; International Anti-Opium Association, *Opium Cultivation and Traffic in China*.

Chinese opium was seized in: Australia; North America; the Philippines; East and Southeast Asia.³⁷

By 1928, the Kuomintang ('National People's Party') had partly unified China under their authority and removed many competing warlords through military force or diplomacy; ending the so-called warlord era and providing China with the last nine-years of relative peace and order until 1949.³⁸ The Kuomintang administered an opium monopoly which sold gradually decreasing quantities of opium to registered consumers.³⁹ In 1928, the Kuomintang passed the Opium Suppression Act⁴⁰ which criminalised all unregulated production and sale. Provincial and district officials were ordered to eradicate crops and punish re-cultivation. The Act was followed by a series of regulations which together allowed for the punishment of ineffective state officials and obliged magistrates to comply with the 1928 Act.⁴¹

Nonetheless, unregulated production and sale continued, including the implication of the civil military in morphine manufacturing and illicit opiate trafficking.⁴² This said, strict prohibitions were enforced in areas where the Kuomintang were conducting anti-communist campaigns: ineffective magistrates were punished and farmers were executed.⁴³

³⁷ See, Bulletin of Narcotics, 'Illicit Traffic in Opium'; Welles A. Gray, 'The Opium Problem,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 122 (1925) 148-159.

³⁸ Peace and order must be perceived in relative terms as the Kuomintang failed to protect the peasantry from the violence and exploitation of military forces: Bianco, *origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*.

³⁹ Baumler, 'Opium Control Versus Opium Suppression: The Origin of the 1935 Six-Year Plan to Eliminate Opium and Drugs'; B. Dai, 'A Brief Sketch of the Opium Condition in China During the Year 1926-1927,' in National Anti-Opium Association of China (ed.) *Opium: A World Problem*, 1(4) (National Anti-Opium Association of China, 1928).

⁴⁰ '1928 Opium Suppression Act,' in National Anti-Opium Association of China (ed.) *Opium: A World Problem*, 2(1) (National Anti-Opium Association of China, 1928).

⁴¹ Chinese Government Opium Suppression Committee, (1929), *Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs: Annual Report, 1929*. TNA FO371/15524.

⁴² See, FO, (1930), 'British-Consulate General, Chungking. Morphine: Reports on Prohibition of Manufacture'. TNA FO228/4292. 1930/75; H.H. Harding, (1932), 'British Consulate, Foochow, 20th September, 1932'. TNA FO371/16251; A.J. Martin, (1932), 'Mr. A.J. Martin to Sir Miles W. Lampon. (British Consulate, Foochow) 18th January, 1932'. TNA CO825/139; Mills, (1924), 'Acting Consul Mills to Sir R. Macleay. November 7th 1923'. TNA FO371/10337. *Political: Far East Opium*; Henry G.W. Woodhead, 'Current Comment on Events in China: The Truth About Opium in China,' *Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury* (1930); Slack, 'The National Anti-Opium Association and the Guomindang State, 1924-1937'.

⁴³ Zhou Yongming, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999).

Throughout the 1920s, opium continued to be produced in warlord controlled areas; perpetuating conflicts between warlord factions and the central Government.⁴⁴ The Kuomintang delegate to the Hague Opium Conference described suppression as a 'farce' and declared that 12,090 tons were produced annually.⁴⁵ Henry Woodhead, who considered the Kuomintang figure too conservative, dispatched a questionnaire to knowledgeable individuals on the opium situation. The findings suggested the continual compulsion of farmers by military and civil authorities to produce opium. Furthermore, national production had increased under Kuomintang protection with just three provinces actively enforcing prohibition.⁴⁶

In short, by the end of the 1920s production continued unabated, interdiction was unenforced and the Kuomintang were either helpless⁴⁷ or facilitating production and distribution. In 1930, the League of Nations singled China out as the primary source of illicit opium in East and Southeast Asia, whilst Louise Eisenlohr described China as 'the most serious menace to any scheme of universal control, either of drug manufacture or of opium cultivation'.⁴⁸ Zhou Yongming reports how 1930 represented the peak of Chinese production:⁴⁹ production ranged anywhere between 12,195 tonnes⁵⁰ and 60,000 tonnes.⁵¹ While Kuomintang measures to reduce production after 1935 shall be discussed briefly below, the following section shall introduce history's second largest opium producer: Afghanistan.

3 Afghanistan: 1950-2001

Afghanistan, which only became a major global source of opium during the mid-1950s,⁵² first prohibited opium in 1969. The ban was, however, under resourced and

⁴⁴ Chinese Government Opium Suppression Committee, (1929), *Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs: Annual Report, 1929*; Dai, (1928), 'A Brief Sketch of the Opium Condition in China During the Year 1926-1927'; Woodhead, 'Current Comment on Events in China: The Truth About Opium in China'.

⁴⁵ W.L. Teh, 'Opium Problem Reaches Acute Stage: A Case for International Co-operation and Control,' *The Chinese Nation*, 28th January 1931, p.1.

⁴⁶ Woodhead, 'Current Comment on Events in China: The Truth about Opium in China'.

⁴⁷ Buckley, 'China's Failure to Suppress Opium Traffic'.

⁴⁸ Louise S. Eisenlohr, *International Narcotics Control* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1934), p.207; League of Nations, *Commission of Enquiry into the Control of Opium-Smoking in the Far East: Report to the Council: Detailed Memoranda on Each Territory Visited by the Commission* (C.635.M.254.1930, 1930).

⁴⁹ Zhou Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era* (World Scientific Publishing, 2000).

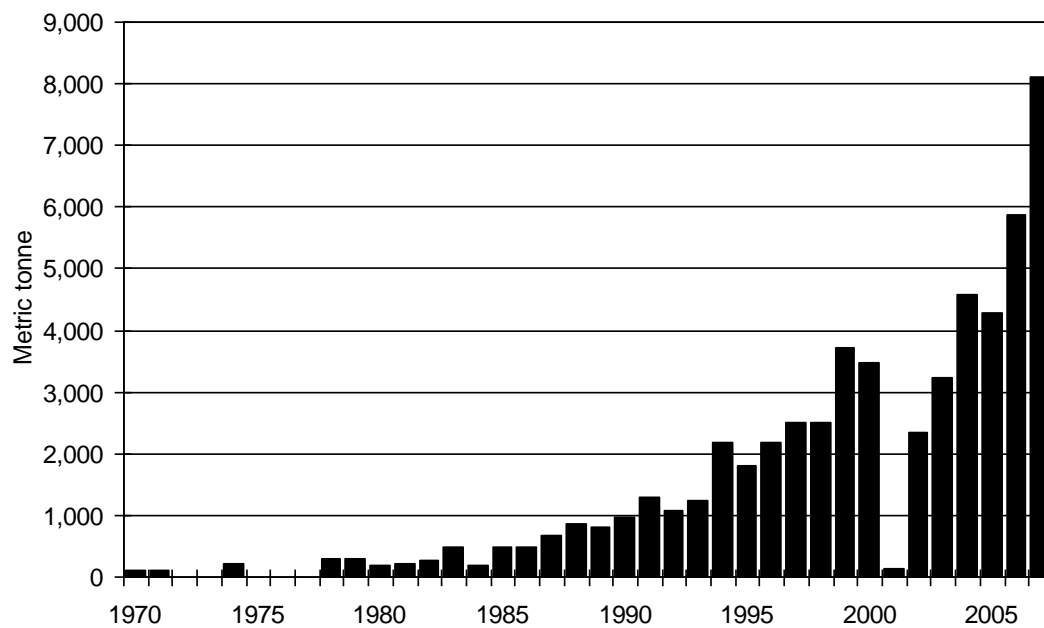
⁵⁰ League of Nations, (1936), cited in Slack, 'The National Anti-Opium Association and the Guomindang State, 1924-1937'.

⁵¹ Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*.

⁵² International Narcotics Control Board, *Report for the International Narcotics Control Board for 1976* (E/INCB/21, 1973).

seldom imposed,⁵³ especially during the periods of violent conflict after the 1978 *coup d'état*. The combined conflicts of the 1980s and 1990s devastated Afghanistan's agricultural resources and rural infrastructure, leaving opium as one of the few available cash crops.⁵⁴ A situation magnified by many Mujahedeen warlords facilitating opiate production, manufacturing and distribution.⁵⁵ Production steeply increased throughout this period (see Figure 1).

Figure . Afghanistan: Opium production (1970-2007)



Source: adapted from, Holahan, J.F. and Henningsen, P.A. (1972). 'The Economics of Heroin'. In Drug Abuse Survey Project. (Eds.). *Dealing with Drug Abuse*. Washington: Praeger Publishers; NNICC. (1978-1993). *The Supply of Drugs to the US Illicit Market*. Washington: US Government Printing Office; INCSR. (1995-2010). *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*. Washington: US State Department; UNODC. (2002-2010). *World Drug Report*. Vienna: UNODC.

⁵³ International Narcotics Control Board, *Report for the International Narcotics Control Board for 1976* (E/INCB/9, 1970).

⁵⁴ Ministry of Counter Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy: An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*, 2006 (Consulted 18 July 2009) www.afghanconflictmonitor.org/AFGHANISTAN_NationalDrugControlStrategy_January2006.pdf; Barnet Rubin and Alexander Guáqueta, *Fighting Drugs and Building Peace Towards Policy Coherence between Counter-Narcotics and Peace Building* (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2007); World Bank, *Afghanistan - State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty* (World Bank, 2005).

⁵⁵ Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs* (Brookings Institute, 2010).

The 1992 overthrow of the Communist Government launched a period of 'warlord rule'⁵⁶ whereby multiple warlords and criminal organisations fought for control of territory and the profits from illicit trades.⁵⁷ Consequently, by 1994 Afghanistan had overtaken Burma as the world's largest source of illicit opium. A modicum of stability was eventually established by the Taliban. While the Taliban initially enforced a strict ban on opium, by 1996 - aware of the resentment many felt at losing opium revenue - prohibition was repealed and the Taliban began protecting and taxing the trade.⁵⁸ *De facto* legalisation increased the number of provinces producing opium from ten to 23.⁵⁹

In 2001, under international pressure, the Taliban once again banned opium production. Administering an intervention centred upon a highly repressive incarnation of law enforcement,⁶⁰ the area under cultivation fell by 91 percent.⁶¹ The ban drove many landowners and farmers further into debt, facilitated widespread popular resistance and weakened the Taliban's authority just prior to the American led invasion.⁶² During the conflict, rural infrastructures were further damaged⁶³ and the state disintegrated into warring and rent seeking factions. Production increased on a steep incline from then onwards (see Figure 1).

4 Afghanistan: 2001-2011

In 2009, it was estimated that 1.9 percent of the Afghan population had consumed opium.⁶⁴ While not as high as Imperial China, Afghanistan remains one of the world's largest opium consuming populations. In terms of supply, for many of the Afghan political elite the opium trade is rewarding. Many warlords appointed to legitimate

⁵⁶ Hermann Kreutzmann, 'Afghanistan and the Opium World Market: Poppy Production and Trade,' *Iranian Studies*, 40(5) (2007) 605-621, p. 612.

⁵⁷ Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs*; Larry Goodson, 'Afghanistan's Long Road to Reconstruction,' *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1) (2002) 82-99.

⁵⁸ Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs*; Barnett Rubin and Jake Sherman, *Counter-Narcotics to Stabilize Afghanistan: The False Promise of Crop Eradication* (Centre for International Cooperation, 2009).

⁵⁹ Jonathan Goodhand, 'Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan,' *International Peacekeeping*, 15(3) (2008) 405-423.

⁶⁰ Graham Farrell and John Thorne, 'Where Have all the Flowers Gone?: Evaluation of the Taliban Crackdown Against Opium Poppy Cultivation in Afghanistan,' *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 16(2) (2005) 81-91.

⁶¹ UN International Drug Control Programme, *Global Impact of the Ban on Opium Production in Afghanistan* (UNDCP, 2001).

⁶² Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs*.

⁶³ Ministry of Counter Narcotics, *National Drug Control Strategy: An Updated Five-Year Strategy for Tackling the Illicit Drug Problem*.

⁶⁴ United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, *World Drug Report 2011*.

political/bureaucratic positions after 2001 had previously exerted authority over aspects of the opiate trade.⁶⁵ While formal ties with overt, criminal activity were rejected in order to enter legitimate state institutions, several former warlords exploited their position by protecting 'former' contacts.⁶⁶

A less iniquitous obstruction to the state (or political elite) from perceiving opium suppression as in their best interest may be the perception that a sharp decline in production would be economically and politically damaging. Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries in the world. The Government of Afghanistan have reported that 12 million individuals survive below the poverty line, while the UN has ranked it the fourth poorest country in the world in terms of food security.⁶⁷ In 2009, opium was produced by 12.9 percent of the rural population,⁶⁸ whilst a quarter of all economic activity was centred upon opium.⁶⁹ Analogous to the 2001 Taliban opium ban, there is a concern that suppression would strengthen the insurgency and alienate rural populations.⁷⁰ Hence, while the opium trade represents a barrier to long-term economic growth and foreign investment,⁷¹ support for a policy which could remove the income of a third of the population, destabilise the economy and ignite anti-government feelings is understandably low.

Afghanistan has 'historically been characterised by a weak state in dynamic relations with a strong society', resulting in a series of complex relationships between the state

⁶⁵ Scott Baldauf and Faye Bowers, 'Afghanistan Riddled with Drug Ties,' *Christian Science Monitor*, May 13 2005; Letizia Paoli, Victoria Greenfield and Peter Reuter, *The World Heroin Market: Can Supply be Cut?* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶⁶ Mark Shaw, 'Drug Trafficking and the Development of Organised Crime in Post-Taliban Afghanistan,' in Doris Buddenberg and William Byrd (eds.) *Afghanistan's Drug Industry: Structure, Functioning, Dynamics and Implications for Counter-Narcotics Policy* (World Bank, 2006); see William Byrd, 'Responding to the Challenge of Afghanistan's Opium Economy: Developing Lessons and Policy Implications,' in Philippe Keefer and Norman Loayza (eds.) *Innocent Bystanders: Developing Countries and the War on Drugs* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); Goodhand, 'Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan'.

⁶⁷ Wolfgang Danspeckgruber, 'Background and Summary,' in Wolfgang Danspeckgruber (ed.) *Petersberg Papers on Afghanistan and the Region* (Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, 2009).

⁶⁸ UN Office of Drugs and Crime, *Afghanistan Opium Survey 2009* (Consulted January 2009) <http://www.unodc.org/>

⁶⁹ Byrd, 'Responding to the Challenge of Afghanistan's Opium Economy: Developing Lessons and Policy Implications'.

⁷⁰ Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drugs*; Christine Fair and Seth Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*, United States Institute of Peace, 2009 (Consulted 28 June 2010) <http://www.usip.org/publications/securing-afghanistan-getting-track>

⁷¹ World Bank, *Afghanistan - State Building, Sustaining Growth, and Reducing Poverty*.

and multiple 'micro-societies' based upon cultural, tribal or linguistic lines.⁷² While Kabul presently exerts fragile control over some of the national territory, parallel centres of authority exist throughout much of Afghanistan. Some southern and eastern areas are governed entirely by the Taliban, while in other areas governance is limited by an insurgency which has annually increased in intensity since 2002.⁷³

Even in areas with a significant state presence, the Government 'has neither the capacity nor the legitimacy to mobilise capital or coercion'.⁷⁴ Most state institutions are corrupt, lacking in adequate resources and trained personnel, and generally ineffective.⁷⁵ Since 2005, the weaknesses of the Government, and high civilian casualties from the insurgency, have diminished popular support for Kabul and increased support for insurgent groups.⁷⁶

The weakness in governance and lack of state authority is most conspicuous in the criminal justice system: the vast majority of Afghans choose to use informal dispute resolution mechanisms, or even the Taliban, rather than the formal criminal justice system,⁷⁷ which is under-resourced, undertrained and inefficient. Evocative of the entire system, the police are corrupt, abusive and criminalised.⁷⁸

Representative of state weakness is that since 2006, drug control has been centred upon the 'Good Performance Indicators' scheme and 'Governor-led Eradication' which motivate provincial and district governors to ban and eradicate opium poppies. Under the scheme, governors are rewarded with funding for development projects if their provinces can present significant reductions.⁷⁹

⁷² Amin Saikal, 'Afghanistan: Elite Fragmentation,' in Wolfgang Danspeckgruber (ed.) *Petersberg Papers on Afghanistan and the Region* (Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, 2009) p.65.

⁷³ Fair and Jones, *Securing Afghanistan*; Talatbek Masadykov, Antonio Giustozzi and James Page, *Negotiating with the Taliban: Towards a Solution for the Afghan Conflict*, (London School of Economics, 2010); Paoli et al., *The World Heroin Market: Can Supply be Cut?*

⁷⁴ Goodhand, 'Corrupting or Consolidating the Peace? The Drugs Economy and Post-conflict Peacebuilding in Afghanistan,' p.415.

⁷⁵ Saikal, 'Afghanistan: Elite Fragmentation'; James Windle and Graham Farrell, 'Afghanistan,' in Graeme Newman and Doris Chung (eds.) *Crime and Punishment Around the World* (Greenwood Publishers, 2010).

⁷⁶ Masadykov et al., *Negotiating with the Taliban: Towards a Solution for the Afghan Conflict*.

⁷⁷ Ali Wardak, 'The Rule of Law in Afghanistan: An Overview', in Wolfgang Danspeckgruber (ed.) *Petersberg Papers on Afghanistan and the Region* (Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, 2009).

⁷⁸ Windle and Farrell, 'Afghanistan'.

⁷⁹ Christopher Blanchard, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy* (Congressional Research Service, RL32686, 2009).

More often than not, governors must negotiate with local power-holders (i.e., warlords, strongmen or tribal leaders) to eradicate crops in their sphere of influence.⁸⁰ Governor and local power-holder administered suppression has tended to centre upon law enforcement - including forced eradication and the threat of military attack - rather than the development of alternative incomes. The lack of developmental aid has pushed many (ex-)opium farmers deeper into poverty and debt.⁸¹ While the relationship between Kabul and governors, and between governors and local power-holders, is often unstable and reliant on negotiations. Many have sought the maintenance of insecurity for personal gain while there are reports that opium bans have been administered to control prices. Others have siphoned compensation intended for the farmer or funding for village development into their own pockets or inequitably distributed resources from those which need them the most.⁸²

Having discussed history's two largest producers of opium the last case study will introduce a successful national intervention. Before introducing the intervention undertaken by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the intervening period between the Warlord and Communist era's (1935-49) shall be summarised to provide some context.

5 The People's Republic of China: 1935-49

By 1935, large portions of China were under Kuomintang authority and most western warlords had been integrated into the state, allowing the Kuomintang to administer the 'Six-Year Plan'. Under the 'Enforcement Measures for the Suppression of Dangerous Drugs',⁸³ the Plan provided for the gradual suppression of distribution and consumption by 1940: production was prohibition in all but eight provinces.⁸⁴ Under a

⁸⁰ Byrd, 'Responding to the Challenge of Afghanistan's Opium Economy: Developing Lessons and Policy Implications'; David Mansfield, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2009 (Consulted November 2010) <http://www.areu.org.af>; Dipali Mukhopadhyay, 'Disguised Warlordism and Combatanthood in Balkh: The Persistence of Informal Power in the Formal Afghan State,' *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9(4) (2009) 535-564, p.549.

⁸¹ Martin Jelsma and Thomas Kramer, *Downward Spiral: Banning Opium in Afghanistan and Burma* (Transnational Institute, 2005); Mansfield, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*; Adam Pain and Paula Kantor, *Understanding and Addressing Context in Rural Afghanistan: How Villages Differ and Why*, Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, 2010 (Consulted November 2010) <http://www.areu.org.af>

⁸² Felbab-Brown, *Shooting Up: Counterinsurgency and the War on Drug*; Mansfield, *Where Have All the Flowers Gone?*; Pain and Kantor, *Understanding and Addressing Context in Rural Afghanistan: How Villages Differ and Why*.

⁸³ Reproduced in A. Cadogan, (1935), 'Sir A. Cadogan to Sir. John Simon. June 13th 1935'. TNA FO371/19366. *Political: Far Eastern Opium*.

⁸⁴ The Plan is discussed in greater detail by: Baumler, 'Opium Control Versus Opium Suppression: The Origin of the 1935 Six-Year Plan to Eliminate Opium and Drugs'; League of

state monopoly, farmers were licensed to produce gradually diminishing quantities for sale through the state monopoly to registered consumers and opium merchants were taxed by the state whilst transiting the Yangtze River to the markets of Shanghai and Hubei.⁸⁵ Punishments for unauthorised production or trade were reported as 'barbarous'.⁸⁶ at least 263 individuals were executed in 1935⁸⁷ and unregulated crops were forcefully eradicated. Crop substitution was administered and by 1939, wheat was reported to be more profitable than opium in Hupeh and Kansu Provinces.⁸⁸

Several foreign observers were initially dubious of the national and provincial commitment. Some stronger warlords overtly resisted Kuomintang authority or clandestinely administered their own monopolies, while significant quantities of opium were diverted from the official monopoly.⁸⁹ During the first year of the Plan, the League of Nations declared China the principal global source of both raw opium and manufactured opiates.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, in 1937 President Chiang Kai-shek reported that the 'cultivation of the opium poppy in the various provinces in the interior has long since been completely suppressed' and was limited to a small number of districts in the 'frontier provinces'.⁹¹ The statement was collaborated at the League of Nations by America and France, while the Foreign Policy Association reported that 'the rising price of opium... had forced many to give up smoking'.⁹² Success, however, was limited by conflict. In 1937, Japan invaded and occupied the majority of

Nations, *Report to the Council Concerning the Preparatory Work for the Conference to Consider the Possibility of Limiting and Controlling the Cultivation of the Opium Poppy and the Production of Raw Opium and Controlling Other Raw Materials for the Manufacture of Opium Alkaloids* (League of Nations, 1938); Slack, 'The National Anti-Opium Association and the Guomindang State, 1924-1937'.

⁸⁵ Baumler, 'Opium Control Versus Opium Suppression: The Origin of the 1935 Six-Year Plan to Eliminate Opium and Drugs'.

⁸⁶ 'The Scourge of Opium: Chiang Kai-shek's Campaign,' *The Times*, 27 June 1935, p.17.

⁸⁷ 'Execution of Opium Traffickers,' *The Times*, 4 June 1935; G.S. Moss, (1936), 'Moss to H.G. Howe. 27th May 1936'. TNA: FO 371/20294. *Political: Far Eastern Opium*.

⁸⁸ Bulletin of Narcotics, 'Opium Production Throughout the World,' *Bulletin of Narcotics*, 1 (1949) 6-38; League of Nations, *Traffic in Opium and other Dangerous Drugs: Annual Reports by Governments for 1937, China* (C.127.M.79.1939.XI, 1939).

⁸⁹ See, R. Austin, (1936), 'R. Austin to R.G. Howe. July 20th 1936' TNA FO371/20295. *Political: Far Eastern Opium*; J. Brennan, (1934), 'Consular-General Sir. J. Brennan to Sir A. Cadogan. July 24th 1934'. TNA FO 371/18198. *Political: Far Eastern Opium*; A. Cadogan, (1935), 'Sir A. Cadogan to Sir. John Simon. June 13th 1935'; H.H. Harding, (1932), 'British Consulate, Foochow, 20th September, 1932'; E.W.P. Mill, (1935), 'Mills to Sir Alexander Cadogan. September 28th 1935'. TNA FO371/19376. *Political: Far Eastern Opium*; also, Frederick Merrill, *Japan and the Opium Menace* (Foreign Policy Association, 1942).

⁹⁰ League of Nations, *Nineteenth Assembly: Seventh Committee. Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs* (A.VII/5.1936, 1936); US Bureau of Narcotics, (1936), *Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs*. TNA FO371/22203.

⁹¹ Chiang Kai-shek, (1937), *An Address delivered on June 3rd 1937, By Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, Director-General for Opium Suppression*. TNA FO371/23577, p.31.

⁹² Merrill, *Japan and the Opium Menace*, p.46.

central Chinese provinces: fracturing the nine years of relative peace and stability.⁹³ The Japanese military monopolised, and facilitated, opium production and distribution, which had practically ceased under the Plan.⁹⁴

In 1939, the Kuomintang reported to the League of Nations that after one last purge - in which 159,449 hectares of poppies were eradicated, four farmers were executed and 25 imprisoned - almost all production had ceased in areas under their authority. Britain and Siam, however, complained that Yunnanese opium continued to be smuggled into Siam.⁹⁵ This said, in a statement confirmed by the British Foreign Office, the Kuomintang Interior Minister declared that production was limited to Yunnanese border areas.⁹⁶ The Province was declared 'opium-free' by the British Consulate in 1940. Conversely, the Consulate to Sichuan Province reported how opium was smuggled into the province from Sikang, Kweichow and Yunnan. Both consulates, however, reported that scarcity had inflated retail-prices.⁹⁷

By 1937, production had declined to an estimated 890 tonnes.⁹⁸ In 1941, when absolute prohibition was enacted, production was limited to Japanese occupied territories and the remote frontier areas⁹⁹ of Yunnan, Kweichow and Sikang, where violent opposition to eradication was common.

⁹³ Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*; Fairbank, *China: A New History*.

⁹⁴ Merrill, *Japan and the Opium Menace*; Reuters, (1940), 'Opium Dealers Association Inauguration' (19th October 1940). TNA FO371/763. *Far Eastern Opium*; A.A.L. Tuson, (1940), 'A.A.L. Tuson (British Embasst Peking) to Sir Archibold Clark Kerr (British Embassy Shanghai) 9th October 1940'. TNA FO371/763. *Far Eastern Opium*. For more in-depth discussions on the opiate trade within Japanese controlled areas of China refer to: essays in Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi (eds.) *Opium Regimes: China, Britain, and Japan, 1839-1952* (University of California Press, 2000). For complaints by China and foreign nations against Japan see: League of Nations, *Nineteenth Assembly: Seventh Committee. Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs*, 1936; League of Nations, *Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs* (C.202.M.131.1939.XI, 1939). The potential bias of the belligerent US and Chinese Governments must, however, be considered: see Kevin Ryan, 'Toward an Explanation of the Persistence of Failed Policy: Binding Drug Policy to Foreign Policy, 1930-1962,' Jurg Gerber and Eric Jensen (eds.) *Drug War, American Style* (Routledge, 2000).

⁹⁵ League of Nations, *Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs*.

⁹⁶ See, Kuo Min News Agency, (1939), 'Opium Suppression Results. 3rd June, 1939'. TNA FO371/23577. For British responses: FO, (1939), 'British Consulate-General, Chungking. Opium Suppression, Progress in Szechwan. 20th October, 1939'. TNA FO371/23577; (1939), 'British Embassy, Shanghai Dispatch, 2nd November, 1939' *ibid*.

⁹⁷ A.A.S. Franklin, (1941), 'Franklin (Consular-General Chungking) to Sir Archibold Clark Kerr (British Ambassador Shanghai). 2nd April 1941'. TNA FO371/763. *Far Eastern Opium*; H.I. Prideaux-Brune, (1941), 'Consular-General, Yunnanfu, to Sir A. Clark Kerr (British Embassy Shanghai)'. TNA FO371/763. *Far Eastern Opium*.

⁹⁸ League of Nations, *Advisory Committee on Traffic in Opium and Other Dangerous Drugs*.

This data may not, however, account for clandestine production.

⁹⁹ Merrill, *Japan and the Opium Menace*.

While American and British intelligence suggests that Chinese production remained low throughout the early-1940s,¹⁰⁰ diminishing Kuomintang authority during the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and Civil War (1945-49) resulted in a resurgence in production as, once again, all warring factions profited from the production and trade in opium, in some cases compelling farmers.¹⁰¹ In 1944, the League of Nations reported that China produced 65.4 percent of the world's illicit opium. In 1947, the League's Permanent Central Opium Board stated 'China may still be well at the head of the list of opium-producing countries'.¹⁰²

6 People's Republic of China: 1949+

In 1949, the CCP expelled the Kuomintang from office and by 1952 had largely unified the country under their authority, renaming the country the People's Republic of China. In 1950, the CCP promulgated the Decree Regarding Suppression of Opium and Narcotics which obliged: forced eradication in areas which had come under state authority; gradual reductions in areas inhabited by minority groups 'in the light of the actual local circumstances'; complete prohibition on the distribution of opium (and other narcotics) and that all offenders be 'severely punished'.¹⁰³ It is widely acknowledged that production had ceased by 1953 in areas under state authority: minority areas lagged until the late-1950s after which production was minimal, sporadic and limited to remote areas of Yunnan.¹⁰⁴

The intervention can be split into three interlinking constituent parts: incentives, disincentives and social control. Together these increased the risk and decreased the rewards for producing opium. Furthermore, a number of factors converged to reduce

¹⁰⁰ FO, (1945), *British Embassy, Chungking to Anthony Eden*. TNA FO 371/50647; G.A. Morlock, (1944), *Limitation on the Production of Opium*, in US Department of State Bulletin, 6(285), 723-727 *ibid.*.

¹⁰¹ Walker, *Opium and Foreign Policy: The Anglo-American Search for Order in Asia, 1912-1954*; Chao Zhongli, 'Yanhe Jinjue Yapainyan du de Huigu (Looking Back on the Elimination of Opium Smoking in Yanhe),' in Alan Baumler (ed.) *Modern China and Opium: A Reader* (University of Michigan Press, 2001); Chen Yung-fa, 'Blooming Poppy Under the Red Sun: The Yan'an Way and the Opium Trade,' in Tony Saich and Hans van de Ven (eds.) *New Perspectives on the Chinese Communist Revolution* (East Gate Book, 1995).

¹⁰² Louise F. Atzenwiler, *Pre-War production and Distribution of Narcotic Drugs and Their Raw Materials* (Permanent Central Opium Board: C.24.M.24.1944.X, 1944); Bulletin of Narcotics, 'Opium Production Throughout the World,' p.28.

¹⁰³ *Translation of Political Affairs Yuan Issues Degree Regarding Suppression of Opium and Narcotics, Peking 24th February 1949*. TNA FO371/88823.

¹⁰⁴ Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (1972), *Secretariat for Home Affairs, Hong Kong: The problem of narcotic drugs in Hong Kong*. TNA FO40/360; Rensselaer Lee, 'Drugs in Communist and Former Communist States,' *Transnational Organised Crime*, 1(2) (1995) 193-205; US Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The U.S. Heroin Problem and Southeast Asia* (US Government Printing Office, 1973); Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*.

demand. The introduction of penicillin reduced the need for opium as medicine while recreationally it was increasingly perceived as old-fashioned, especially by the urban youth.¹⁰⁵ Even as early as the 1940s British Foreign Office observers remarked that opium smoking had become unfashionable and 'shameful'.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, social control and repressive prohibition had inflated the risk for those who wished to consume opium.¹⁰⁷

Incentives

In 'minority areas'¹⁰⁸ crop substitution, land redistribution and, infrastructural and social welfare projects were administered prior to law enforcement to enable both state extension and drug control.¹⁰⁹ A Chinese participant at a UN conference recounted how the CCP distributed improved seeds and modern technology to farmers throughout China to encourage them to grow grains and cash crops instead of opium.¹¹⁰ Several foreign observers described how food crops had replaced opium.¹¹¹ In terms of cash crops, throughout the 1950s the CCP encouraged the production of tobacco and manufacturing of cigarettes: annual cigarette production increased from 80 billion in 1949 to 238 billion in 1958.¹¹²

Precise information on crop substitution is, however, limited and CCP accounts and foreign observations appear somewhat inconsistent with Chinese agricultural planning. Between 1952 and 1957, agricultural productivity grew on average by 4.6 percent per year¹¹³ and by 1956/57 food access had improved:¹¹⁴ although remaining

¹⁰⁵ Dikötter et al., *Narcotic Culture: A History of Drugs in China*; Paul Lowinger, 'The Solution to Narcotic Addiction in the People's Republic of China,' *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*, 4(2) (1977) 165-178.

¹⁰⁶ Prideaux-Brune, (1941), 'Consular-General, Yunnanfu, to Sir A. Clark Kerr (British Embassy Shanghai),' p.1.

¹⁰⁷ Meyer and Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade*; Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*.

¹⁰⁸ Defined as 'all ethnic groups that are not Han Chinese', the majority lived in remote mountainous areas: Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*, p.19.

¹⁰⁹ Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*.

¹¹⁰ UN Development Programme, 'Statement Presented by the Observers of the People's Republic of China,' *Regional Seminar on Replacement of Opium Poppy Cultivation December 14-19 1987* (UNDP, 1987).

¹¹¹ Kettil Bruun, Lynn Pan and Ingemar Rexed, *The Gentleman's Club* (University of Chicago Press, 1975); Lowinger, 'The Solution to Narcotic Addiction in the People's Republic of China'.

¹¹² Carol Benedict, *Golden-Silk Smoke: A History of Tobacco in China, 1550-2010* (University of California Press, 2011).

¹¹³ Shujie Yao, 'A Note on the Causal Factors of China's Famine in 1959-1961,' *The Journal of Political Economy*, 107(6) (1999) 1365-1369.

¹¹⁴ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*.

below international definitions of subsistence.¹¹⁵ Much of the success was attributable to private production, which was banned in 1958. Central control of agriculture, which was mismanaged by bureaucrats with little experience of agriculture,¹¹⁶ resulted in a famine which killed an estimated 18.48 to 30 million rural people between 1959 and 1961.¹¹⁷

In 1958, the CCP implemented the 'Great Leap Forward' to modernise the state. As the development of heavy industry was an integral component of the plan, the majority of farmers were ordered away from agriculture to support iron production.¹¹⁸ Those remaining on agricultural duties were ordered to offset the diversion of resources by increasing the planting density of crops, as this was erroneously believed to increase yields. Furthermore, there was insufficient labour to collect even negligible harvests. The policy failed to produce large-amounts of iron whilst decreasing food availability.¹¹⁹

Agricultural planning and management was ineffective during the period when the development of opium farming areas would have been administered. Thus, if developmental assistance was administered as an incentive for the cessation of opium production, the experience of the Great Leap Forward would suggest the inability of the CCP to provide effective alternative livelihoods, at least in some areas. The CCP did, however, provide opium farmers with alternative incentives.

A factor in CCP success during the three-year Civil War was that the Kuomintang had become increasingly unpopular with a rural population which had been 'constantly subjected to forced labour and arbitrary taxation, constantly brutalised and plundered' by soldiers and bandits. Massive inflation and the imposition of unequal taxation on agricultural crops had pushed many rural people's further into poverty, meaning that 'poverty, abuse, and early death were the only prospects for

¹¹⁵ Fairbank, *China: A New History*.

¹¹⁶ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*; Yao, 'A Note on the Causal Factors of China's Famine in 1959-1961'. Justin Lin, however, rejects this as a cause but concedes that it did add to the severity of the famine: Justin Lin, 'Collectivization and China's Agricultural Crisis in 1959-1961,' *The Journal of Political Economy*, 98(6) (1990) 1228-1252.

¹¹⁷ Yao, 'A Note on the Causal Factors of China's Famine in 1959-1961'; Justin Lin and Dennis Yang, 'Food Availability, Entitlements and the Chinese Famine of 1959-61,' *The Economic Journal*, 110(460) (2000) 136-158.

¹¹⁸ Vaclav Smil, 'China's Great Famine: 40 Years Later,' *British Medical Journal*, 319 (1999) 1619-1621.

¹¹⁹ Fairbank, *China: A New History*; Smil, 'China's Great Famine: 40 Years Later'; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*; Yao, 'A Note on the Causal Factors of China's Famine in 1959-1961'.

nearly half a billion people'. Additionally, there was an awareness of the pervasive corruption of the Kuomintang, whilst war had highlighted the inability of the Kuomintang's administrative capabilities. Many were quite simply tired of decades of constant violent conflict, abuse and insecurity.¹²⁰

The CCP, on the other hand, received significant rural support. The policies of land redistribution and landlord punishment were especially popular: in central-south China, an estimated 60 percent of the population benefitted from land reforms.¹²¹ As John Fairbank notes:

Here was a conquering army of country boys who were strictly self-disciplined, polite, and helpful, at the opposite pole from the looting and raping warlord and troops and even departing... [Kuomintang]. Here was a dedicated government that really cleaned things up – not only the drains and streets but also the beggars, prostitutes and petty criminals... Here was a new China one could be proud of, one that controlled inflation, abolished foreign privileges, stamped out opium smoking and corruption generally, and brought the citizenry into a multitude of sociable activities to repair public works, spread literacy, control disease,...//... Only later did they see that the Promised Land was based on systematic control and manipulation.¹²²

Therefore, the initial redistribution of land, removal of warlord and landlord exploitation, freeing of slaves, ideological affiliation, improved security and general promises of improved livelihoods under socialism may have motivated many to acquiesce to the cessation of opium production. This said, by the early-1960s, agricultural mismanagement - at considerable cost to human life - might have diluted revolutionary zeal. By this point, however, China had developed a highly repressive, intrusive and hegemonic state machine.

Disincentives

In late-1951/early-1952, the Three and Five Antis Campaigns identified - through investigations into official corruption - a number of large-scale traffickers. Following a nationwide intelligence gathering campaign, from August 1952 there were four nationwide waves of arrests, followed by extensive propaganda campaigns. The arrests ceased in October 1952 to allow the judiciary to catch-up: 82,056 of 369,705 individuals initially targeted had been arrested (34,775 were imprisoned or executed;

¹²⁰ Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949*, pp.87/89; Fairbank, *China: A New History*.

¹²¹ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*.

¹²² Fairbank, *China: A New History*, p.348.

2,138 were imprisoned in labour camps; 6,843 were placed under surveillance and 4,337 were 'uncategorised').¹²³ Opium poppies were forcefully eradicated.¹²⁴

Offenders were tried and punished during mass rallies in which 800¹²⁵ to 880 individuals were publically executed. Before the campaign the CCP had specified what percentage of those prosecuted were to be executed: enough to remove high-level traffickers, especially those deemed counter-revolutionaries, and inflate perceived risk to deter lower-level offenders from future transgression.¹²⁶ Annette Rubinstein witnessed:

... a policy of highly selective, strictly enforced, drastic punitive measures for major offenders on the one hand, and on the other hand amnesty and government support for victims and cooperative petty offender.¹²⁷

Carol Jones reports that the mid-1950s/mid-1960s were perceived by many as a 'golden age' of safety and order.¹²⁸ During this period punishments included execution, forced labour and administrative sanctions, such as forced resettlement or limited access to social goods.¹²⁹ While capital punishment was imposed by courts, some forced labour and administrative sanctions could be imposed by civil associations and a police force which possessed 'virtually unlimited power in investigation, detaining, prosecuting and convicting criminal suspects' and commonly punished extra-judicially.¹³⁰ Therefore, while the state may have executed 'just' 800 to 880 individuals, extra-judicial deaths or other physical punishments may have been higher. Punishments for production may have also been categorised as crimes against the communal production of food crops, counterrevolutionary crimes or linked to the more repressive aspects of minority 'liberation'.

¹²³ Ting Chang, *China Always Says "No" to Narcotics* (Foreign Language Press, 2004); Yongming, *China's Anti-Drug Campaign in the Reform Era*.

¹²⁴ Meyer and Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade*; Spence, *The Search for Modern China*.

¹²⁵ Chang, *China Always Says "No" to Narcotics*; Meyer and Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade*.

¹²⁶ Meyer and Parssinen, *Webs of Smoke: Smugglers, Warlords, Spies, and the History of the International Drug Trade*; Lowinger, 'The Solution to Narcotic Addiction in the People's Republic of China'.

¹²⁷ Annette Rubinstein, 'How China Got Rid of Opium,' *Monthly Review*, 25(5) (1973) 58-63, p.61.

¹²⁸ Carol Jones, 'Crime and Criminal Justice in China, 1949-99,' in James Sheptycki and Ali Wardak (eds.) *Transnational and Comparative Criminology* (Routledge, 2006); also Hong Lu and Terence Miethe, *China's Death Penalty: History, Law, and Contemporary Practice* (Routledge, 2007).

¹²⁹ Yuan-li Wu, 'Building a Network of Controls: A Chronology Outline,' in Yuan-li Wu and Franz Michael (eds.) *Human Rights in the People's Republic of China* (Westview Press, 1988).

¹³⁰ Lu and Miethe, *China's Death Penalty: History, Law, and Contemporary Practice*, p.47.

The severity of law enforcement dovetailed the level of authority possessed by the CCP in specific area. In areas under CCP authority, bans on production were enforced quickly and centred upon public humiliation and executions, near constant surveillance and 'administrative punishments'. Whereas in minority areas the state sequenced opium bans after administering policies of state extension and agricultural reform. This is illustrated with an example of the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture (Sichuan Province) where 50 to 80 percent of households produced opium. In the Han Chinese areas, suppression was conducted in synergy with the national campaign: opium was forcefully eradicated, 26 individuals were executed and over 300 were imprisoned. In ethnic Yi areas, the CCP initially projected propaganda and appealed to local leaders to cease selling to the Han Chinese population. Then, in mid-1954, the CCP began interdicting opium in Han areas and extending substitute crops in Yi areas. By 1955, Yi farmers voluntarily uprooted 1,072 hectares in exchange for substitute crops. An attempt by the CCP at forced eradication was, however, violently resisted. Then in 1956, the CCP administered 'democratic reforms' in Yi areas. As these included land distribution and the freeing of slaves they were popular with the Yi peasantry, who joined the CCP military in suppressing opposition to reform. By late-1957 all ethnic Yi areas were under CCP authority and prohibition was immediately enforced. As farmers did not want to jeopardise their newly acquired land or freedom and the primary facilitators of opium production (the landlords) had been removed, production decreased as acquiescence to prohibition increased. Then, in 1958/59, all opium was forcefully eradicated and 3,000 were arrested as drug offenders or counter-revolutionaries.¹³¹

Social control

Communism made people dependent on the state. In urban areas, necessities were rationed and housing, health care and education distributed through places of work. In rural areas land redistribution and collectivisation tied farmers to communal land.¹³² There was minimal freedom of travel or choice of employment.¹³³ In short, China was a 'police state' with 'unquestioned control over the populace in villages'.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Yongming, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building*.

¹³² Fairbank, *China: A New History*; Lu and Miethe, *China's Death Penalty: History, Law, and Contemporary Practice*.

¹³³ Wu, 'Building a Network of Controls: A Chronology Outline'.

¹³⁴ Fairbank, *China: A New History*, pp.353/368.

Civil institutions – such as resident's or women's groups - were established in cities and rural villages and, alongside official coercive state institutions, 'contributed to the formation of a social control network that could encompass every aspect of an individual's life' and was strong enough to 'break connections even between family members'.¹³⁵ Furthermore, fear of being a target for CCP criticism produced high levels of compliance whilst providing the state 'a gaze far more "panoptical" than anything designed by Bentham'.¹³⁶

7 Cross-case comparison

This section shall summarise the three case study findings to elucidate some similarities and differences. The primary findings are illustrated in Table 1. China (1917-35) and Afghanistan (2000-11) are two of history's largest opium producing nations. In both cases, the central government possessed limited authority over the majority of the national territory, much of which was controlled by local power-holders; many of whom were competing with other power-holders and the state for authority. Furthermore, many of the political elite failed to perceive the suppression of production as in their best interest for reasons of national interest and/or personal greed. Both cases were characterised by widespread domestic consumption. Where China and Afghanistan differ is that in China there was no real national attempt at suppressing production (until 1935); while in Afghanistan suppression interventions are officially a national priority.

The introduction of the People's Republic of China into the analytical mix provides a case of a government capable of opium suppression, compared against two cases of incapable national governments. The People's Republic of China is almost the reverse of the Afghan and earlier Chinese experiences. The centre possessed almost complete authority over its national territory, whilst violent conflict was minimal. The majority of the political elite perceived suppression as in their best interest from ideological and practical perspectives. There is little evidence of the state or its employees facilitating the trade, partly because of controls over corruption and the perceived benefits of suppression. The perception of opium as an old fashioned drug coupled with the efficient (yet unsavoury) suppression of opium consumption reduced the domestic demand for opium. In turn, reducing the farmgate

¹³⁵ Spence, *The Search for Modern China*; Wu, 'Building a Network of Controls: A Chronology Outline'; Yongming, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building*, p.110.

¹³⁶ Jones, 'Crime and Criminal Justice in China, 1949-99,' pp.182/183.

price and lessening opposition to suppression. Furthermore, the CCP provided farmers with incentives to acquiesce to suppression; based upon loyalty to the Revolution, these included: land reform, the freeing of slaves and ideological affiliation. Revolutionary zeal also afforded the state the opportunity to create a highly intrusive surveillance network.

Unlike in Afghanistan, the CCP provided farmers with initial incentives to acquiesce to suppression. Only then - once the state had consolidated its authority and farmers perceived some benefit in suppression - were the highly effective (and repressive) law enforcement campaigns (supported by intrusive surveillance) administered.

Table Similarities and differences

China (1917-1935)	Afghanistan (2000-2011)	Peoples Republic of China
Centre possesses limited authority	Centre possesses limited authority	Centre possesses almost complete authority
Local power-holders uncontrolled by centre	Local power-holders uncontrolled by centre	Local power-holders controlled by centre
Large-scale internal conflicts (multiple belligerents)	Large-scale internal conflicts (multiple belligerents)	Minimal internal conflict
Control of opium is not perceived as in political elites best interest	Control of opium is not perceived as in political elites best interest	Control of opium is perceived as in political elites best interest
State officials facilitate trade	State officials facilitate trade	Minimal facilitation by state officials
Significant domestic opium consumption	Significant domestic opium consumption	Minimal domestic opium consumption
Minimal surveillance	Insufficient surveillance	Extensive and intrusive surveillance
No intervention	Intervention provides minimal incentive to ceasing production	Intervention provides extensive incentives to ceasing production
No intervention	Ineffective intervention	Effective intervention

Conclusions and Insights for Contemporary Afghanistan

This review of Afghanistan is not meant to be exhaustive but rather to illustrate a practical application of the comparative findings. The comparisons of the three cases suggests that suppression of illicit production requires four medium-term objectives: (1) The extension of the state into isolated and hostile areas; (2) The facilitation of a sense of self-interest in the Afghan Government and political elite towards opium suppression; (3) The facilitation of a perception that suppression benefits opium farmers; (4) The strengthening of the Afghan Government's capacity to monitor opium farmers and enforce national law.

All strategies must facilitate these primary objectives; any that negate them must be discontinued. Analogously to the People's Republic of China, the Afghan intervention must be designed as opium suppression mainstreamed into state extension. In the Afghan context, rural development¹³⁷ and conflict resolution/limitation may represent effective means of supporting state extension, whilst providing incentives for farmers to accept opium bans. The establishment of a safer Afghanistan may represent the definitive incentive for the cessation of opium production. As one fieldworker reported the peoples 'of Helmand would trade almost anything for [security and peace, and]... would follow anyone who could offer it'.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Opium production for the licit pharmaceutical market is an innovative approach which warrants further investigation. It is unlikely, however, that such a programme would be of benefit to the Afghan people nor the most efficient means of development in the current environment. See James Windle, 'Poppies for Medicine in Afghanistan: Lessons from India and Turkey,' accepted for publication in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*.

¹³⁸ Joel Hafvenstein, *Opium Season: A Year on the Afghan Frontier* (Lyons Press, 2007) p.315.